ST

UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARIAT

ST/SGB/Organization
8 August 1996

ORGANIZATION MANUAL

A CONCISE GUIDE TO THE FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN

ST/SGB/Organization
8 August 1996

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN

To: Members of the staff

Subject: ORGANIZATION MANUAL OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. The present bulletin contains the table of contents of and introduction to the new Organization Manual of the Secretariat. The description of the organization and functions of each department/office is issued separately and forms part of this Manual.

2. Document ST/SGB/Organization of 8 June 1989 is hereby superseded.

Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI
Secretary-General

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ORGANIZATION MANUAL OF THE SECRETARIAT

INTRODUCTION

An overview

1. The Secretariat is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It provides the services required for deliberations of the legislative organs of the United Nations, namely, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the Trusteeship Council, including their subsidiary bodies. It came into being on 1 February 1946, when the first Secretary-General of the United Nations was appointed by the General Assembly. Until that time, the Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations had served as the secretariat of the Organization. The deliberations of the legislative organs lead to the adoption of resolutions and action programmes for the betterment of many aspects of life, such as the peaceful settlement of disputes between States, the realization of independence, the right to self-determination and other human rights of all peoples of the world, the improvement of socio-economic conditions in all countries, international cooperation in providing relief to victims of conflicts and natural disasters and the adoption of regulations for safeguarding the environment, for the exploitation of marine resources and for activities in outer space. The resolutions and action programmes are the outcome of deliberations of the representatives of Member States in those legislative organs and their subsidiary bodies. The Secretariat facilitates those deliberations through providing services and implementing the mandated work programme. The resources required for carrying out the programmes of work of the United Nations are provided by contributions from the Member States as determined by the General Assembly. The Secretariat is located at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York. It has branch offices in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. It also includes five regional commissions in Addis Ababa, Amman, Bangkok, Geneva and Santiago. The broad functions of the United Nations Secretariat, with some variations from field to field, are as follows:

(a) To produce reports and other documents containing information, analyses, historical background, research findings and policy suggestions that facilitate the deliberations and decision-making by the legislative organs and their subsidiary bodies;

(b) To provide secretariat services to the legislative organs and their subsidiary bodies by, inter alia, providing secretaries to committees, councils and commissions; assisting in planning the work of the sessions and in drafting relevant reports;

(c) To provide meeting services (interpretation, verbatim reporting and précis-writing services) to the legislative organs, in accordance with the policies adopted by the General Assembly;

(d) To provide editorial, translation and documents reproduction services for United Nations documents in the six official languages, in accordance with the policies adopted by the General Assembly;

(e) To conduct multifaceted studies and to provide information in various fields that respond to the priority needs of Governments of member countries, particularly those of the developing countries;

(f) To promote economic and social development through regional and subregional cooperation and integration;

(g) To produce and publish statistical publications, information bulletins and analytical work as mandated by the General Assembly;

(h) To organize conferences, expert group meetings and seminars on topics of concern to the international community, as authorized by the legislative organs;

(i) To provide technical assistance to the developing countries, i.e., providing experts, resources and/or materials to countries, offering training opportunities to officials of member countries by providing fellowships to universities and other institutes and inviting them to seminars and round tables organized by the United Nations;

(j) To undertake fact-finding, goodwill or special missions to countries, areas or locations as authorized by the General Assembly or the Security Council;

(k) To plan, prepare, conduct and direct all United Nations field operations, in particular peace-keeping and humanitarian operations, as mandated by the Security Council and the General Assembly;

(l) To arrange for dissemination to the public of information on United Nations activities and decisions;

(m) To provide the programme planning, financial, personnel, legal, management and general services that are essential for the rational selection of work items and allocate resources among them and for the effective, economic and efficient performance of services and functions of the Secretariat, within the legal framework of regulations, rules and policies adopted by the General Assembly.

Salient features of the organization of the Secretariat

2. The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary-General who is the Chief Administrative Officer of the United Nations. The Secretariat is divided into several major purpose units, each of which is headed by an Under-Secretary-General, an Assistant Secretary-General or an official of equivalent level responsible for the implementation of one or more major programme(s). They direct and manage the functions of the major purpose units under the guidance of the Secretary-General. The units of the Secretariat can be grouped into two categories. The first category includes the units for which the Secretary-General is directly responsible to the General Assembly. The second category includes the units whose heads are responsible to the General Assembly either directly or through a governing body. The Secretary-General is the appointing authority of the staff in the first category units and in the second category units the head of the unit is nominated by the Secretary-General and appointed by the General Assembly. The present Manual covers the functions and

organization of the first category major units. An organization chart of those major units is provided on page 4. The second category units are listed in annex III. Other distinguishing features of the second category units are described in their founding resolutions. The Office of Internal Oversight Services may be considered as a third purpose unit, exercising operational independence under the authority of the Secretary-General. Its head is appointed by, and reports through the Secretary-General to, the General Assembly.

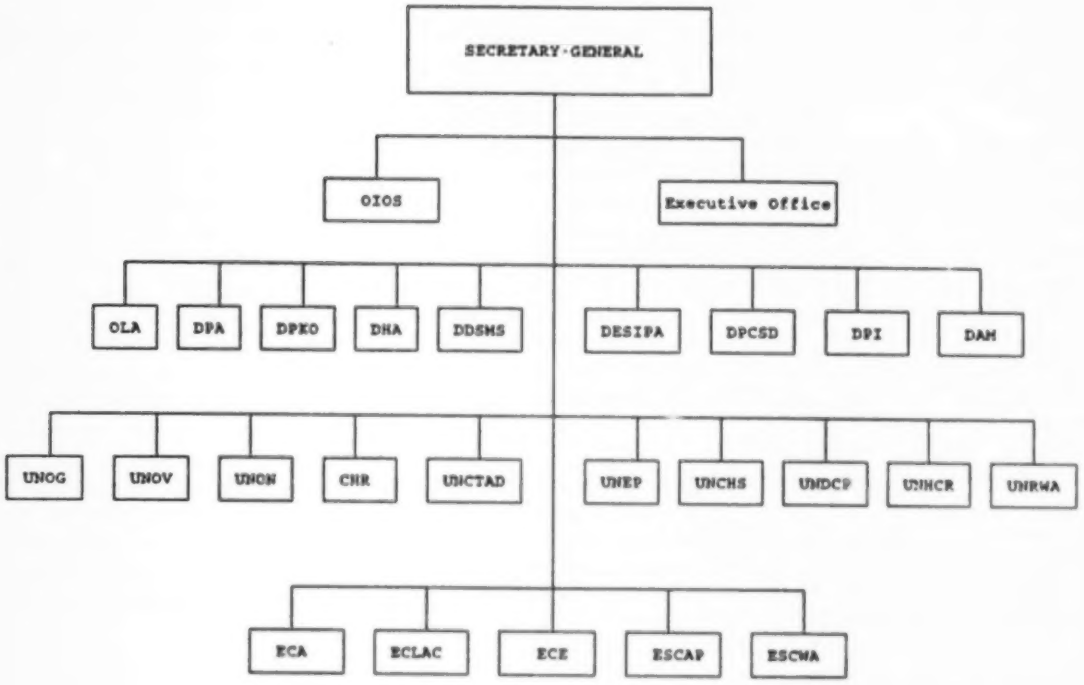
3. The major units reporting to the Secretary-General are variously denominated as "department", "office", "secretariat" or "centre" (henceforth referred to as departments/offices). Each department/office is divided and subdivided into several hierarchical organizational elements, each of which, under a supervisor, is responsible for a segment of the functions of the department/office concerned. The lowest element in each hierarchical line has several working-level staff who, together with similar staff in other hierarchical lines, produce the bulk of the "outputs" (products/services) required of the department/office concerned. The supervisors at different hierarchical levels direct and manage the work of the organizational elements concerned. They are also required to produce some of the outputs, particularly in departments/offices that have several supervisory levels. At some hierarchical levels, the supervisors are assisted in their supervisory and administrative work by a staff office, e.g., an office of the Under-Secretary-General and an executive office, so that they can devote more of their time to the production of outputs.

4. The number of supervisory levels in the Secretariat varies from one to seven, including that of the Secretary-General. The hierarchical elements of departments/offices are denominated as "centre", "division", "branch/service", "section" and "unit". The description of norms adopted by the Secretary-General and approved by the General Assembly as nomenclature of these elements is provided in paragraph 19 below.

Coverage of the Manual

5. The present Manual describes the functions and organization of those departments/offices whose work programmes are financed fully or partly from the regular budget of the United Nations, that is to say, from the assessed contributions of Member States. It does not, therefore, include the descriptions of functions and organization of entities that are completely supported by extrabudgetary or voluntary funds. A list of such entities is provided in annex III.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT*



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* Shows the departments/offices that are fully or partly financed out of the regular budget of the United Nations and are note part of another department/office.

Format of the Manual

6. The present Manual is divided into loose-leaf sections. Each section contains the statement of functions and organization of a department/office. The statement begins with an overview of the historical background and broad functions of the department/office and is followed by the description of functions of its authorized subsidiary organizational elements. It also contains an organization chart of the department/office.

7. Some types of organizational elements are common to many or all departments/offices. In order to avoid a repetition of the description of functions pertaining to those organizational elements in individual sections of the Manual, they are described in paragraphs 12 to 18 below. These descriptions should be read wherever a reference to them is made in individual sections.

8. There is no particular order in the listing of sections. Each section is identified by the name of the department/office. Requests for revisions to the approved organizational structure and functions of its secretariat, departments and offices shall be based on the stipulation of regulation 3.11 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/PPBME Rules/1 (1987)). This regulation provides, inter alia, that the medium-term plan shall be revised as necessary every two years to incorporate required programme changes.

10. In order to facilitate the identification of the hierarchical level of an element, as well as the retrieval of descriptions pertaining to specific elements, the organizational elements in each section are numbered. The numbering system adopted also makes a distinction between "line" and "staff" elements. The line elements are numbered by arabic numerals in a decimal system. The staff elements either do not bear any number or are identified alphabetically, as appropriate. No number is used in the case of heads of departments/offices. The detailed guidelines for the preparation of ST/SGB/Organization are provided in the annex to document ST/AI/409 of 4 August 1995.

Status of the Manual and procedures for amendment or revision

10. The description provided in the present Manual represents the authorized functions and organization of elements included in it. As stated in paragraph 3 of administrative instruction ST/AI/239 of 5 August 1976, it should be "the basis of entries in the annual list of staff in the United Nations Secretariat, the telephone directory [and other directories], the P.5 personnel action form and miscellaneous administrative issuances. References to organizational units and functional titles of officials (where such titles are derived from organizational nomenclature) must conform to the organizational nomenclature used in the Manual".

11. The responsibility for initiating the revision of texts of the Manual following any changes that have been authorized lies with the department/office concerned. A revised text, including supporting documents, should be forwarded to the Organization Management Unit, which will issue a Secretary-General's bulletin after approval by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and

Management on behalf of the Secretary-General. The information required by the Organization Management Unit for processing the text is indicated in bulletin ST/SGB/150/Rev.1 of 1 June 1977 and administrative instruction ST/AI/409.

Functions of elements that are common to all or many departments/offices

12. Head of department/office. The functions of a head of department/office are as follows:

(a) Finalizing the medium-term plan and programme budget proposals of the department/office, ensuring that the proposed outputs would fulfil the priority needs of their users and the legislative mandates;

(b) Representing the department/office before the legislative organs and their subsidiary bodies and providing them with information and explanations, as required, in support of the medium-term plan and programme budget proposals of the department/office;

(c) Carrying out the management activities or making managerial decisions for enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the programme concerned and resources approved for the department/office;

(d) Approving relevant reports, communications, decisions and recommendations in respect of the work of the office;

(e) Assisting, advising and keeping the Secretary-General informed on matters concerning the department/office and carrying out any special tasks that may be assigned by the Secretary-General;

(f) Ensuring coordination of activities of the department/office with those of other organizational entities performing similar tasks;

(g) Discussing the issues and concerns in the field(s) assigned to the department/office with government representatives, members of legislative organs, other departments/offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the press and individuals active in relevant fields, as and when necessary;

(h) Identifying broad strategies required for the development and implementation of the work programme of the department/office;

(i) Ensuring that the supervisory personnel are mainly engaged in the production of substantive outputs rather than in routine administrative tasks;

(j) Ensuring that the distribution of work within the department/office is even and fair among comparable staff and that their expertise and availability for doing any work are fully taken into account before engaging consultants or outside experts;

(k) Ensuring that the regulations, rules and instructions of the Organization, particularly those concerning recognition of merit and competence, are followed strictly;

(l) Producing aspects of the planned outputs of the department/office concerned;

(m) Carrying out tasks as may be assigned by the Secretary-General.

13. Deputy to an official. The functions of a deputy, wherever the post exists, are as follows:

(a) Assisting the head of the programme in the performance of his/her functions;

(b) Acting as the officer-in-charge of the department/office in the absence of the official concerned;

(c) Producing aspects of the work programme/outputs of the department/office concerned.

14. Supervisors. There are two kinds of supervisors in the Secretariat: The first-level supervisor oversees the work of a number of staff and is referred to as "Chief". The second-level supervisor is expected to oversee the work of a number of units each headed by a "Chief". The latter higher-level supervisor may be called "Director".

15. The functions of a first-level supervisor are as follows:

(a) Formulating the medium-term plan and programme budget proposals of the organizational element in consultation with appropriate staff members, keeping in view the types of outputs that may be needed by its clients and the legislative directives in the field concerned;

(b) Assigning work to the staff members under his/her supervision fairly and evenly;

(c) Reviewing the specifications of outputs to be produced and approving or recommending their approval to higher authorities;

(d) Producing aspects of the planned outputs of the department/office concerned;

(e) Reviewing the work progress in the organizational element and taking appropriate action for accomplishing the tasks or modifying the work plan and reporting thereon to his/her supervisor;

(f) Reviewing, in consultation with the staff member concerned, the outputs produced, with a view to ensuring that the programme objectives are met;

(g) Coordinating the final products and submitting them for consideration/ approval to the next level supervisor or the head of the office;

(h) Carrying out periodic self-evaluation of the outputs produced in the organizational element, as called for under the relevant rules;

(i) Representing or making arrangements for representation of the organizational element at relevant meetings and forums;

(j) Evaluating the performance of staff objectively;

(k) Making recommendations for the promotion of staff under his/her supervision in accordance with the principles of seniority and merit;

(l) Recommending extensions of fixed-term contracts, the granting of probationary appointments and conversion thereof to permanent appointment, the extension of contracts beyond retirement age, involuntary separations and transfers and termination of contracts of staff under his/her supervision;

(m) Approving the leave schedule of the staff under his/her supervision;

(n) Keeping his/her supervisor informed of significant developments in matters concerning the organizational element.

16. The functions of a second-level supervisor, i.e., Director, are as follows:

(a) Planning and organizing the work of the organizational unit and ensuring that the objectives of the programme are met;

(b) Consolidating, as required, the material submitted by organizational elements reporting to him/her;

(c) Establishing cross-programme coordination and ensuring that possible duplications are eliminated;

(d) Reviewing the recommendations of first-level supervisors and approving them or recommending their approval to higher authorities;

(e) Evaluating the performance of first-level supervisors and countersigning the performance evaluation reports prepared by first-level supervisors;

(f) Producing and preparing aspects of the planned outputs of the department/office concerned.

17. Staff office. The staff office services the immediate offices of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General, facilitating the exercise of supervisory responsibility by these officials. The officers working in such offices do not exercise any formal authority of their own. They carry out work in the name of the official to whom the office is attached. The functions of such staff elements include the following:

(a) Routing correspondence to appropriate officials and keeping the head of the office informed of such actions;

(b) Advising officials on the instructions of the head of the office;

(c) Drawing the attention of the head of the office to communications that need to be acted upon urgently;

(d) Consolidating materials generated by various units reporting to the head of the office;

(e) Developing a system of monitoring and follow-up for various activities that are carried out by the organizational elements in the department/office;

(f) Ensuring the maintenance of a log of all incoming and outgoing correspondence addressed to or signed by the head of the office;

(g) Ensuring that all relevant correspondence and background material is attached to communications that must be acted upon by the head of the office;

(h) Ensuring the maintenance of a calendar of meetings of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General or Assistant Secretary-General and assisting in the conduct of these meetings by preparing the minutes of the meetings and by providing background information to the subject under consideration;

(i) Representing or arranging for representation of the department/office at appropriate meetings in accordance with the general or particular instructions;

(j) Carrying out special assignments which are not the responsibility of other officials in the department/office concerned as assigned by the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General or Assistant Secretary-General.

18. Executive office/administrative unit. In each department/office or for several of them, there is an executive office that assists the head of the department/office and other officials in the discharge of their financial, personnel and general administrative responsibilities, so that they can devote more of their time to their substantive, supervisory and other managerial duties. In some departments/offices, these functions could also be carried out by an administrative unit. The functions of an executive office/administrative unit include the following:

(a) Preparing instructions to the constituent elements of the department/office for the formulation of their medium-term plans and programme budget proposals, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts; reviewing and consolidating such proposals in accordance with the instructions of the head of the department and in consultation with the heads of constituent elements; and participating in discussions with the Programme Planning and Budget Division for the finalization of such proposals;

(b) Authorizing the incurring of obligations and expenditures against the funds budgeted for the department/office in accordance with the allotment advice and clearance received from the Office of the Controller (in this function, the executive/administrative officer, or a designated official of the office/unit, personally acts as the certifying officer);

(c) Writing to the Office of Human Resources Management to initiate the process of filling vacant posts and authorizing, in the meantime, with the approval of the head of the department/office, the temporary lending/borrowing by the organizational elements concerned, of vacant posts to/from other organizational elements, as may be admissible under financial and staff regulations and rules;

(d) Maintaining the seniority list of staff belonging to various occupational groups and, in consultation with the heads of the constituent organizational elements and with the approval of the head of the department/office, making recommendations on the promotion of staff;

(e) Processing recommendations to the Office of Human Resources Management for the extension, modification or termination of contracts of staff, such as the extension of fixed-term contracts, the granting of probationary appointments and the conversion thereof to permanent appointments, the extension of contracts beyond retirement age, involuntary separations, transfers, etc., on the request of heads of constituent elements of the department/office and with the approval of the head of the department/office;

(f) Representing the department/office in the meetings of the Appointment and Promotion Board, appointment and promotion panels and other committees, as necessary, in accordance with the direction of the head of the department/office concerned;

(g) Authorizing home leave and other official travel on the recommendation of the heads of organizational elements and certifying the related entitlements of staff;

(h) Certifying education grant, dependency allowance, language allowance and other entitlements of staff;

(i) Preparing and maintaining leave records and other personnel data;

(j) Advising the heads of organizational elements to prepare the performance evaluation reports of staff and, in cases of rebuttal, suggesting names for inclusion in the investigating panel;

(k) Making appropriate recommendations in cases requiring exercise of discretionary authority or exception to Staff Rules (permission for outside activity, home-leave travel to a destination other than the home country, etc.);

(l) Certifying staff requests for visas and extensions thereof, identity cards, etc.;

(m) Issuing certificates to staff members regarding their service with the United Nations, salary, etc.;

(n) Assisting staff members or their dependants in obtaining their entitlements from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and other United Nations sources;

(o) Performing other assignments as assigned by the Head(s) of the department/office.

Norms established by the Secretary-General for organizational nomenclature

19. The norms established for various terms are as follows:

Terms	Norms
Department	A minimum of 30 posts in the Professional category and above, headed by an Under-Secretary-General. For regional commissions, the title of Executive Secretary is used.
Centre	A minimum of 20 Professional and higher-level posts and headed by an officer at the D-2 level, and exceptionally at the Assistant Secretary-General level. The term is to be used only in exceptional circumstances, e.g., as a result of a decision of the General Assembly or other organ.
Division	A minimum of 15 Professional and higher-level posts and headed by a Director at the D-2 level. For regional commissions, a minimum of eight Professional and higher-level posts and headed by a Chief at the D-1 level.
Branch/Service	A minimum of eight Professional and higher-level posts and headed by an officer at the D-1 level with the title "Head of Branch". The term "Service" is to be used for elements whose work is essentially of an administrative support or service nature. The terms "Branch/Service" should not be used in the regional commissions.
Section	A minimum of four Professional posts and headed by a Chief at the P-5 or P-4 level.
Unit	A minimum of four posts and headed by a chief of unit. For use of the term, there should be a demonstrated need for a designated supervisor and for recognition outside the department/office.

20. In cases where an organizational element meets the criterion of number of posts, but the level of the head is above the criteria for that level, more weight should be given to number of posts than to the level of head.